

State of Michigan
State Board of Education

RESOLUTION

USE OF AMERICAN INDIAN MASCOTS,
NICKNAMES, AND LOGOS

WHEREAS, people of all cultures, races, and religions have a right to be treated with dignity and respect; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan State Board of Education believes it is important that all students learn about the cultural aspects of various communities so that they will understand cultural norms, develop tolerance, respect differences, and become good citizens and productive adults; and

WHEREAS, some American Indian* tribes, organizations, state and local officials, and private citizens find the use of American Indian mascots, nicknames, logos, and symbols within our public schools to be offensive, and further find that their use has a detrimental effect on the educational achievement of American Indian students; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan Civil Rights Commission, by Resolution dated May 20, 2002, "encourages all school districts to ensure that instructional materials, course work, policies, and procedures are respectful of cultural differences and enhance cultural competency, and are void of stereotypic language and representations"; and

WHEREAS, the United States Commission on Civil Rights, by Resolution dated April 13, 2001, called for an end to the use of American Indian images and team names by schools: *"Schools should not use their influence to perpetuate misrepresentations of any culture of people. Stereotypes of American Indians teach all students that the stereotyping of minority groups is acceptable, a dangerous lesson in such a diverse society"*; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan State Board of Education has adopted *Policies for Creating Effective Learning Environments, Policies on Bullying, and Policies on Safe Schools*, and encourages school districts to work to promote positive learning atmospheres that foster learning for all Michigan's children; and

WHEREAS, educators have a responsibility to model behavior that celebrates and respects the diverse traditions and beliefs of all citizens; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education recognizes that this matter should be addressed at the local level of each separate school district; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Michigan State Board of Education promotes curricula that is fair, appropriate, and accurate in depicting the cultures and histories of all people; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Michigan State Board of Education recommends that educators teach all students to be aware of and respectful of various cultures present in society; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the Michigan State Board of Education supports and strongly recommends the elimination of American Indian mascots, nicknames, logos, fight songs, insignias, antics, and team descriptors by all Michigan schools.

* *The State Board of Education is aware that some individuals prefer the term Native American. According to the 1995 United States Census Bureau survey, 49 percent of the persons asked preferred American Indian and 37 percent preferred Native American. American Indian is also the term used by the Michigan Civil Rights Commission.*

Kathleen N. Straus, President

Adopted June 26, 2003

Thomas D. Watkins, Jr., Chairman

